PATANJALI FOR WESTERN READERS

THE YOGA APHORISMS OF PATANJALI PARAPHRASED AND MODERNISED FROM VARIOUS ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS AND RECENSIONS

DANIEL R. STEPHEN, M.A.
FORMERLY SCHOLAR OF PEMBROKE COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

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INTRODUCTION

By the practice of " Yoga " man reaches up to God, so that the word most nearly equivalent to it in English is the word " prayer " ; and Yoga as practised in India is of two kinds, " Mental " and " Physical," but it is mental Yoga only which is dealt with in the Aphorisms of Patanjali.

These Aphorisms were originally written in Sanscrit some considerable time before the Christian era ; the exact date, however, is not known, and Patanjali was not the author but only compiled and arranged teaching which was already in existence.

There are no reliable records of Patanjali himself, but the Aphorisms have always been very highly regarded by earnest students in all parts of the world.

In the original Sanscrit the natural meaning of the Aphorisms appears to have been purposely obscured, and there are numerous

Indian commentaries devoted to the elucidation of them.

The versions available in English are also a source of considerable difficulty to the student, so that he is not able to commence at once with the practice of Yoga, but his enthusiasm is wasted in efforts to understand what the teaching really is.

This version embodies an attempt to render into clear language the essential meaning of each Aphorism, but no authority is claimed for it beyond the authority of Patanjali, and should the student find any teaching herein different from that of Patanjali, he must use his own judgment in criticism of it.

The student will find it a most profitable exercise to purchase three or four versions of Patanjali and a manuscript book and to write out his own version.

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CHAPTER I

THE THEORY OF YOGA

1. THE following four chapters are devoted to an exposition of Yoga philosophy, and deal with both the theory and the practice.

2. Yoga may be attained by overcoming the normal tendency of the mind to react to impressions. The word " may " is used to indicate a necessary but not therefore a sufficient qualification for Yoga.

3. When the student has for a moment attained mental repose, he is in a state like that of a spectator who is quietly watching for a spectacle which has not yet occurred and who is so full of his attentiveness as not to think of other things.

This condition of mental repose is called Yoga or meditation.

4. Usually the student is observing some idea with his mind, conscious of the idea, but not at the moment self-conscious of the fact that he is engaged in thought. The student forgets himself in thought, and his mind is said to be modified so as to lose its identity in the idea.

5. The modifications of the mind are divided into five sub-divisions.

6. The five sub-divisions are :

(1) Correct understanding.
(2) Misunderstanding.
(3) Imagination.
(4) Sleep.
(5) Remembrance.

7. Correct understanding may be obtained in three ways :

(1) by direct perception,
(2) by inference,
(3) by testimony.

8. Misunderstanding arises from a failure in one of the three ways of obtaining correct understanding.

9. Imagination is something which is

observed by the mind like a direct perception, but which has no existence in the physical world.

10. Sleep occurs when the physical senses are in abeyance.

11. Remembrance occurs when the mind is able to dwell on an object which is absent in the way that it would do with the object present.

12. The reactivity of the mind which permits of these modifications may be overcome by "direct effort."

13. "Direct effort" is the effort during the period set apart for practice of drawing the mind off from thoughts. When any thought arises the student asserts to himself, "I do not want that thought."

14. This practice leads eventually to Yoga, but the student is unable to succeed in the practice until he takes an oath of devotion. The practice is contrary to the interests of the mental elemental, and only by devotion can its opposition be overcome (IV. 25).

15. Non-attachment or impartiality is

attained with respect to anything when the student has resolved to sacrifice any chance of advantage from that thing. If the object is a non-desirable one, non-attachment is attained when the student has resolved to sacrifice any chance of avoiding harm which the object may cause him.

A " renunciation " is the attainment of a non-attachment by the help of an oath.

A duty is an act for which no merit may be claimed in fulfilment, but which is discreditable in the omission.

An " act of faith " is an act of self-sacrifice which has become necessary on account of duty.

16. Complete non-attachment is attained when the student has, on account of duty, resolved to sacrifice all advantage for himself or others from everything—in other words, by the renunciation of Cosmic Consciousness.

17. By " direct effort " the student may become able to remain in the condition of a spectator with a stationary spectacle, and he is then said to have attained " applied meditation." In this case an object is

present in thought, but the point of view is not continually shifting (I. 3; I. 41; III. 3).

18. Applied meditation is different from meditation in that a spectacle is present before the mind; but the condition is an approach towards meditation, since the spectacle is at rest and not in motion, as with the man of the world. In meditation the mind is in repose without either moving or stationary objects of thought.

19. The student who attains to "applied meditation" before he has attained to non-attachment becomes earth-bound (I. 16).

The student who is earth-bound is like a man who has entered a cavern and the roof has fallen in behind him. Or like a man who has swum out from shore beyond his strength and the tide is carrying him out to sea. Or like one who has entered a burning building and the stairs have collapsed behind him.

Whatever is able to pass downwards only through the astral envelope is called evil.

20. The student who will attain to

meditation and also to voluntary non-attachment may be picked out beforehand by reason of four qualities he will possess :—

(1) Faith (the sacrifice of other objects).
(2) Energy (the concentration of the life forces).
(3) Single-mindedness (the grudging of thought on other subjects).
(4) Discrimination (the acting on his principles).

21. The rapidity of attainment varies with the discrimination of the student (II. 26).

22. Men may be divided into three subdivisions :—

(1) Students who are single-minded.
(2) Students who are acquiring merit.
(3) Men of the world.

23. Yoga may also be attained by devotion to the Master. The student must take an oath to devote his existence to the service of the Master—it is less difficult thus to devote the existence than voluntarily to

renounce the clinging to existence (I. 15 ; II. 9).

The student on this path, by means of compulsory renunciation, finally attains Nirvana, or superexistence and freedom from rebirth (I. 20 ; III. 50 ; IV. 24).

24. The Master takes charge of the karma of the devoted student and thereby accords him that peace which the world cannot give (II. 35).

25. The Master is all-pervasive and patient.

26. The Master is the representative of God and maintains the distinction between right and wrong.

27. The Master cannot be limited by a definition and is therefore unknowable.

28. But the student may call on the Master as Aum.

29. The student may gradually harmonise his bodies by calling on the Master as Aum.

30. When the bodies are not harmonised they form obstacles to Yoga, and the want

of harmony will show itself in one or more of the following ways :—

(1) Illness.
(2) Worry.
(3) Irresolution.
(4) Unreliability.
(5) Self-suppression.
(6) Worldly ambition.
(7) Self-assertion.
(8) Failure to attain meditation.
(9) Failure to maintain meditation.

31. Whenever the student makes a mistake he will suffer from one or more of the following :—

(1) Physical disturbances—pain.
(2) Etheric disturbances—ill-health.
(3) Astral disturbances—fear.
(4) Mental disturbances—agony.

32. To overcome such disturbances the student should undertake strenuous work of some kind.

33. The student may harmonise his bodies by the practice of the following :—

(1) Benevolence.
(2) Impartiality.

(3) Uprightness.
(4) Imperturbability.

34. Or by adopting the hypothesis that all other activities are secondary in importance to the continuous maintenance of the breathing (I. 21 ; II. 49).

35. The student may find encouragement if he obtains an occasional astral vision.

36. Or a mental vision.

37. Or from becoming devoted to some more advanced student.

38. Or from some instruction obtained during sleep.

39. Or from some flash of intuition.

40. The Yogi who has attained to meditation is in rapport with all life.

41. When the Yogi who has attained to meditation directs his mind to an object, he obtains a true mental vision of that object, and thus a full intellectual comprehension of it.

The mind may be compared to a lens in the form of a sphere, so constructed as to be

capable of giving a three-dimensional image inside itself of every external object. In the student the sphere may be thought of as opaque, allowing him to be moulded by the mental environment, but preventing him from observing the external nature of thoughts.

The Yogi may be thought of as containing within his mental sphere a complete reproduction of the whole external mental world, and whenever he alters any part of the image inside his sphere he thereby alters the corresponding external mental form.

42. When the student begins to attain this stage of perception he still has retained in his memory ideas centring round the name or sound for the thing seen, and also a previously built-up imperfect mental image of it. This stage is called the stage of "confused perception."

43. The student attains to the stage of "clear perception" when he discriminates the new image from the ideas centring round the name and from the imperfect image.

44. When the student perceives ideas as

in § 42, he is at the stage of "confused comprehension," and when as in § 43, he is at the stage of "clear comprehension."

45. Buddhi is beyond the range of clear comprehension.

46. Applied meditation has been called meditation with seed, because it may be attained without renunciation (I. 15).

47. The student may attain to clear comprehension by the practice of applied meditation.

48. And also to a reliable intuition.

49. The intuition of generalities attained by the practice of applied meditation cannot be described in intelligible language.

50. All ideas are gradually generalised into one which is as a stationary spectacle before the spectator (I. 18).

51. Meditation is attained when this final spectacle in the mind disintegrates.

CHAPTER II

PRELIMINARY EXERCISES

1. THE care of the etheric body consists in relaxation. The care of the astral body consists in the chanting or humming of tunes, as sacred tunes. The care of the mental body consists in vows of devotion to the Master (I. 23).

2. The student may gradually overcome the obstacles to Yoga by the above exercises (I. 30).

3. The obstacles to Yoga are divided into five sub-divisions :—

(1) Ignorance (II. 5).
(2) Self-esteem (II. 6).
(3) Desire (II. 7).
(4) Aversion (II. 8).
(5) The clinging to existence (II. 9).

4. Ignorance is the fundamental obstacle.

5. Ignorance is the stupid insistence that

one's own point of view is the correct one. The man of the world either believes a thing or disbelieves it or ignores it. The student neither believes nor disbelieves, but always perceives that the evidence before him for any so-called fact is inconclusive, and he continues to maintain an open mind towards it. The student may adopt a working hypothesis. Until this attitude of mind is attained the student of Yoga will continue to make mistakes (I. 31).

6. Self-esteem is the sense of Me and Mine ; for example :

(1) " I am the Boss."

(2) " This money is Mine."

Self-esteem is the cause of separation and is utterly opposed to renunciation.

7. Desire is the looking at a thing in a biassed way, with partiality, because one anticipates advantage from it.

8. Aversion is the looking at a thing in a biassed way with disapproval, because one anticipates a disadvantage from it.

9. The clinging to existence is a plebeian

quality which is common to the Arhat as well as to the man of the world : it implies partiality in the student for the maintenance of his life.

It must be sacrificed either by voluntary or by compulsory renunciation before Nirvana can be attained (I. 23).

10. The student may sacrifice the outward expression of the five obstacles by taking an oath to avoid manifesting them (II. 3).

When the student struggles with them without an oath he practises what is called asceticism.

11. The student may sacrifice the emotional expression of the five obstacles by taking an oath to maintain an opposite attitude of mind.

In the world of thought the student may learn how to sacrifice the five obstacles by meditation.

12. By permitting the existence of any one of the five obstacles, the student continually makes fresh karma.

13. The student will return to rebirth

with a suitable social position, occupation, and length of life, so long as any of the five obstacles remain.

14. He will have the opportunity of enjoying happiness if the obstacle has the aspect of a virtue.

15. The student who is earnestly desirous of attaining meditation is liable to regard mundane affairs as an obstacle, but the application of meditation is in mundane affairs (I. 41).

16. The student should so conduct himself that his bad karma need not be worked out in the physical world. This result may be obtained by the practice of devotion or renunciation in the mental and astral worlds before it is attempted in the physical world (I. 15).

17. Man forgets that he is not a physical body; that is the reason why people go on making fresh karma (IV. 23).

18. The Universe, visible and invisible, is an expression of God and is formed of numerous life waves. It may be correct to

say that such and such a thing exists for the purpose of another, but with the Universe there is no second thing for which it might be supposed to exist.

19. There are four grades of manifestation :

(1) The Physical,
(2) The Astral,
(3) The Mental,
(4) Buddhi,

and each is an expression of God.

20. Man also is an expression of God, but an expression as force. Force manifests in matter.

21. Man evolves by experience gained in the Universe.

22. The Universe ceases to be a place of profitable experience for him who has attained to God, but it continues profitable for others.

23. It is ignorance which prevents men from perceiving that the Universe is but an expression of God (II. 5).

24. Ignorance must be sacrificed.

25. Ignorance may be sacrificed by the attainment of non-attachment (I. 15).

26. Ignorance may also be sacrificed by the maintenance of unbroken meditation.

The student is required to maintain meditation without effort, just as he breathes without special attention. The condition is one of imperturbability, but not the imperturbability of the ignorant man, who is too stupid to perceive impressions, nor that of the egoist, who is separated from his fellows (II. 5 ; II. 6).

When the student has attained to this condition he is said to have attained " Discrimination."

27. The student will have to acquire seven other qualities in the process of attaining " Discrimination " :—

(1) Recollectedness	=	Desirelessness.
(2) Control of mind		Penetration.
(3) Control of body		Energy.
(4) Lofty enthusiasm		Endurance.
(5) Tolerance		Tranquillity.
(6) Faith		Concentration.
(7) Even-mindedness		Balance.

28. The student may gradually become intuitive by the practice of Yoga.

29. Preliminary Yoga is divided into eight sub-divisions :—

(1) Harmlessness (II. 30).
(2) Ceremony (II. 32).
(3) Meditation positions (II. 46).
(4) Watching the breath (II. 49).
(5) Direct effort (I. 13).
(6) Deliberation (III. 2).
(7) Quiescence (II. 53).
(8) Mental repose (II. 54).

30. Harmlessness is divided into five sub-divisions :—

(1) Helpfulness (II. 35).
(2) Trueness (II. 36).
(3) Uprightness (II. 37).
(4) Purity of heart (II. 38).
(5) Freedom from the clinging to existence (II. 9 ; II. 39).

31. The student may acquire the five sub-divisions of harmlessness by taking an oath to observe them.

32. Ceremony is divided into six sub-divisions (II. 29) :—

(1) Vows of physical cleanliness (II. 40).

(2) Vows of right conduct (II. 41).
(3) Vows of forgiveness (II. 42).
(4) Vows of renunciation (II. 43).
(5) Chanting or humming sacred songs (II. 44).
(6) Vows of devotion (II. 45).

33. When the mind of the student is inclined to harmfulness he may discover how to sacrifice the tendency by meditation.

34. The man who practises harmfulness is thereby earth-bound (I. 19).

35. When helpfulness is attained the student becomes a friend of the Master and is protected by his power (I. 24; II. 30).

36. When trueness is attained the student becomes an agent of the Master and a focus for his power.

37. When uprightness is attained the student becomes an assistant of the Master and a guardian of his wealth.

38. When purity of heart is attained the student becomes a pupil of the Master and a channel for his force.

39. When freedom from the clinging to existence is attained the student becomes at one with the Master and free from karma.

40. Vows of physical cleanliness lead to freedom from sensuality (II. 32).

41. Vows of right conduct lead to freedom from worry.

42. Vows of forgiveness lead to happiness.

43. Vows of renunciation lead to spirituality.

44. The chanting or humming of sacred songs leads to purity of thought.

45. Vows of devotion lead to applied meditation (I. 14).

46. A meditation position is one in which the body is held up, but without much attention being required to maintain the position (II. 29).

47. The student will make mistakes unless he practises the following exercises with only slight effort (I. 31) :—

For the first exercise the student watches and relaxes the body in order to accustom it to the meditation position. "Watch the body."

48. For the second exercise the student watches and calms the disturbances surrounding him, until gradually they cease to distract him. "Watch the phenomena."

49. For the third exercise the student watches and calms the breath. "Watch the breath."

50. For the fourth exercise the student watches and calms the etheric body. "Watch the sensations."

51. For the fifth exercise the student watches and calms the astral body, like sitting down for a portrait-painting. "Watch the emotions."

52. For the sixth exercise the student watches and calms the mental body. "Watch the thoughts."

53. For the seventh exercise the student stills the mind, like settling down to think (II. 29).

54. For the eighth exercise the student relaxes the effort to still the mind.

55. By the practice of these exercises the student may attain to Yoga.

CHAPTER III

MEDITATION

1. THE student is said to practise "concentration" when he applies his mind to a subject.

2. When he applies his mind to a subject and remains for some time in one thought without shifting his point of view, he is said to practise "deliberation."

3. When the student is able to deliberate without effort, the action is an "applied meditation" (I. 17).

4. Applied meditation is called "Samyama."

5. Deliberation develops intuition.

6. Deliberation is preliminary to meditation.

7. By the practice of deliberation the student may develop the power of samyama with the probability of a smaller number of

mistakes than the eight preliminary Yoga practices involve (I. 17 ; I. 31 ; II. 29).

8. Deliberation does not lead directly to meditation (I. 14 ; I. 18).

9. Deliberation leads to samyama.

10. With practice the effort required to maintain deliberation becomes smaller.

11. When the student is able to maintain deliberation without effort, the action is an applied meditation.

12. When the student, making samyama, obtains a vivid comprehension of the subject free from verbal expression, the applied meditation is pure (I. 43).

13. Matter, space, and time are required for manifestation, and therefore the manifested universe may be taken as known (algebraically), when for any moment the substance, form, and rate of change of each thing have been obtained.

14. Because a thing is defined in relation to matter, space, and time by describing its substance, form, and rate of change.

15. Evolution proceeds by changes in the substance, form, and rate of change of things.

16. If the student makes samyama on the substance, form, and rate of change of a thing, he may obtain an intuitive knowledge of it.

17. If the student makes samyama on any written or spoken words in relation to the intended meaning, he may obtain an intuitive knowledge of the intended meaning.

18. By samyama on an inborn habit of mind of himself or another person, he may obtain a perception of the previous incarnation in which the habit was acquired.

19. By samyama on a physiognomical trait of another person—the correlated thought habit of that person.

20. This samyama will not give a knowledge of the other person's basis of conduct.

21. By samyama on the relation between light waves and sight—how to cause visual illusions in others.

22. On the will in relation to the body—the length of a person's life.

23. On benevolence and so forth—how to produce these feelings towards any one in others.

24. On animal strength—how to develop it.

25. On intuition—Cosmic Consciousness.

26. On the solar system—a knowledge of the planets.

27. On the universe—a knowledge of the stars.

28. On the pole star—the real motions of the stars.

29. On a person of a vital temperament—a knowledge of the sympathetic system.

30. On a hungry or thirsty person—how to overcome these feelings.

31. On a tired person—muscular fatigue.

32. On the relation between light waves and sight—astral vision.

33. When the student has attained

discrimination, samyama is not required (II. 26).

34. By samyama on a person of a vital temperament—a sympathetic comprehension of others.

35. On himself—the scheme of evolution.

36. By this last samyama the student may obtain an immediate intuitive comprehension of anything.

37. The student who resolves to develop the above powers becomes a source of inconvenience to the Master (I. 19).

38. The Yogi who has acquired Cosmic Consciousness knows how to control the mind of another person from a distance as though from within it (I. 41).

39. By samyama on the etheric body the student may acquire the power of levitation.

40. On the subtle bodies—divine radiance.

41. On the relation between sound waves and hearing—clairaudience.

42. On gravitation—control over gravity.

43. When the student has obtained repose

in his physical and astral bodies, the physical brain will begin to reproduce correctly his mental vision (II. 1).

44. By samyama on the various grades of manifestation the student may obtain control over them (II. 19).

45. Also radiance of the body and other qualities.

46. Beauty, grace, vigour, and a dense etheric body are included under radiance of the body.

47. The student may obtain control over the sense-organs by samyama on the following, in relation to the organs :—

(1) The adaptation to external impressions.
(2) The kind of information obtainable from each.
(3) The consciousness which is dependent on each.
(4) The medium which makes each possible.
(5) The force which causes the external impressions.

48. And also develop his subtle bodies.

49. By samyama on Buddhi the student may obtain Cosmic Consciousness.

50. By the voluntary renunciation of Cosmic Consciousness the student may qualify for Adeptship (I. 16 ; I. 23 ; IV. 24).

51. Repose in the astral world is essential.

52. The illusions characteristic of Buddhi are past and future. By samyama on the moment that has passed in relation to the moment that has not yet come, the student may become free from these illusions.

53. No further illusions then remain.

54. The student may become an Adept by attaining freedom from illusion.

55. The Adept does not desire either existence or freedom from existence.

CHAPTER IV

PROGRESS

1. Occult powers may be obtained in five ways :—

(1) The knowledge of them may be brought over from a previous life.

(2) Or they may be obtained by Hatha Yoga.

(3) Or by Sorcery.

(4) Or by Magic.

(5) Or by Meditation.

2. The student can only qualify for Adeptship by the voluntary renunciation of illusion, but the initiative is with the ego and not with the personality (I. 27).

3. Good works do not enable the student to qualify for Adeptship, but they remove obstacles which otherwise prevent the inflow of power from the Master.

Good works are done, for example, when

the student takes credit to himself for assisting another at his own cost, like being kind to the poor, and is conscious that he is doing more than he is really liable for. If he has not this consciousness, the act is one of faith (I. 15).

4. The ego descends from Buddhi into incarnation for the purpose of evolution.

5. The ego has continuity of existence in Buddhi, but the personality lasts only for the incarnation.

6. Of those who obtain occult powers by various means, only he who attains them after attaining non-attachment is free from attachment to them (I. 19).

7. The works of the Master are neither right nor wrong, for He is a Judge who establishes a new right and wrong by introducing a new note into the harmony of nature (I. 19).

8. The works of others produce karma.

It is not generally convenient for an environment to be provided in which a man could settle all his karma in one life, and

therefore some portions of it only are scheduled for settlement in any one incarnation.

9. A man is frequently able to put off the settlement of a karmic account which may be scheduled for payment, but in that case the account increases as by compound interest until paid.

10. Karma began with the life wave.

11. And will end with it.

12. Past and future are real opposites as high as Buddhi, but no higher.

13. Matter, space, and time are required for objective manifestation.

14. In Buddhi there is no sense of separateness.

15. The hypothesis of the real existence of the material world is more convenient in use than the idealistic hypothesis (II. 5).

16. When the mind of the student is antagonistic to an object, it can obtain no knowledge of it.

17. A man's principles are not readily modified by experience, because they are fixed in the mind by the ego.

18. The mind may conveniently be regarded as an automaton.

19. Because it cannot be directed so as to concentrate on two objects at one time.

20. If all minds are assumed to be automata, it is necessary to postulate a level above the mental.

21. The ego is not perceived by the mind except internally as intuition.

22. When the mind has become so closely harmonised with Buddhi that it remains in repose whilst impressions are coming in, intuition becomes perfect and meditation is attained.

23. The ego does not descend from Buddhi into incarnation for the advantage of the personality (IV. 4).

24. Not until the student has realised this fact does he begin to sacrifice his ignorance (II. 5 ; II. 17).

25. And then the opposition of the mind to non-attachment ceases.

26. When the consent of the mind has

been obtained there remain only the existing obstacles to be disintegrated.

27. The path is the path of voluntary renunciation (I. 15).

28. It leads to Adeptship.

29. With freedom from karma.

30. And to Cosmic Consciousness.

31. With freedom from the illusion of time (III. 52).

32. The distinction between past and future may then be perceived to be an illusion.

33. The word "motive" has ceased to have any meaning in respect of His actions. They cannot be said to be either with motive or without motive, for they have become a direct expression of God (I. 27; II. 18; III. 14; IV. 7).

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